



Runge Conservation Nature Center

# Habitat Happenings

March and April 2005

They wear varying shades of soft green. Their dense, primitive branches often remind me of a tropical jungle. I imagine a miniature world beneath it all, yet ferns are often overlooked because they lack the vibrant colors of flowering plants. They have a reputation of being fragile and difficult to grow. Upon closer inspection, ferns can be seen growing in open sunlight and even in the cracks of rock outcroppings. Not so fragile after all! They are delicate in looks only and have an understated elegance about them. Many of their names reflect their grace - Maidenhair Fern, Lady Fern, and Sensitive Fern. Even the branching leaves of the fern have a soft sounding name – fronds.

Many ferns are, in fact, quite hardy and easy to grow. Give them a good start with just the right amount of shade, rich organic soil and moisture and away they go! Under the canopy of an old

oak tree is an ideal setting, but nearly any spot that is partially shaded will work. Many area nurseries carry ferns native to Missouri so you will be able to enjoy them in your backyard this spring! Start with the Lady Fern that is vigorous and easy to grow. It likes medium shade. Another sun tolerant fern is the Narrow-leaved Glade Fern. This is a slow growing, graceful fern that loves a wet area. The tall Cinnamon Fern will adorn your garden with its cinnamon colored fronds that emerge from the center of the crown. It, too, prefers a wet area and needs shade to partial shade. A shade loving garden must make room for the Christmas Fern, one of our evergreen species. It is one of the first ferns to emerge in the spring. The new coiled fronds are called fiddleheads.

Explore and experiment with our native ferns. Once established, the ferns in your garden will spread and provide beautiful texture and a rich, thick, green cover for many small animals. Year after year, you will enjoy their understated elegance, no longer forgotten.

—Robin Grumm, Naturalist



*The  
Forgotten  
Fern*



# Volunteer News



Forty Runge volunteers helped with this year's Eagle Days event at Lake of the Ozarks. Almost 4,000 people had an opportunity to view eagles in the wild. Thanks Volunteers! We could not have done it without you!



## Exhibits

### Insect Photographs

by Donna Brunet

Up close and brilliant are the photos of Missouri's butterflies and other insects, by longtime resident, Donna Brunet. This exhibit will feature over 35 photos taken with a digital camera equipped with a macro lens. Come and check out some of nature's beauties and maybe learn what's been flying around your backyard.

## Nature Shop

### March/April featured item



**20% OFF**

Heritage card discount does not apply.

### Missouri Wildflowers

The fifth edition of Denison's classic work makes identifying common Missouri wildflowers easy. Its 297 color photographs are arranged by flower color and blooming time. Plant characteristics, habitat, and range are provided. Discounted price is \$9.60 plus tax.

### Runge Conservation

**Nature Center** is located in western Jefferson City. From U.S. 50, exit on Highway 179. Travel north for 1/4 mile to the Nature Center entrance on the left. The Nature Center is open Monday through Saturday 8:00AM to 5:00PM and Noon to 5:00PM on Sundays. No admission fee. 573/526-5544. [www.mdc.missouri.gov/areas/cnc/runge/](http://www.mdc.missouri.gov/areas/cnc/runge/)





# Conservation Kids' Club

Welcome to Conservation Kids' Club, a fun club created for kids 6 through 13 years old who love to explore nature and learn about wildlife. Come to our meeting and we'll sign you up. No reservations required to attend.

## **Spring Symphony**

**Tuesday, March 15 — 6:00-7:30PM**

Pollywogs (Ages 6 through 8) and Bullfrogs (Ages 9 through 13) combine for this event.

Nature is stretching and waking up from a long winter's nap. Let's take a hike to watch and listen for her signs of spring. Enjoy the choir of frogs and the unique call of a woodcock. Come celebrate the season with your Kids' Club pals!



## **Stream Team Clean-up**

**Tuesday, April 19 — 6:00-7:30PM**

Pollywogs (Ages 6 through 8) and Bullfrogs (Ages 9 through 13) combine for this event.

Do you want to help save a stream? Well, the Conservation Kids' Club has adopted our very own mile of Wears Creek which runs along Moss Rock Trace. It's time for us to get right down in the creek and do some clean-up work. So wear your "OK-if-muddy" grubbies and roll up your sleeves...you're gonna make a difference. (Long pants are a must for safety reasons.)

## **Hey, Parents!**

*While big brother/sister attends Conservation Kids' Club, your preschooler (3 through 5 years of age) can be involved in a program at the same time. A preschool program will be available for siblings of Conservation Kids' Club members on Tuesday, March 15, 6:00PM and April 19, 6:00PM. No reservations required.*

## **Lewis and Clark Trunks Available**

Runge Nature Center has Lewis and Clark educational resource trunks available for two-week check-outs. These trunks will give students a chance to handle tools and materials similar to those the expedition carried. Students will discover the importance of natural resources to the westward expansion and compare them to those of today. Lesson plans are included. Please call Robin at 573/522-4115 ext. 3405 to reserve a trunk.



## **2004-2005 Seedling Order Form**

George O. White State Forest Nursery, near Licking, offers Missouri residents a variety of seedlings for reforestation, windbreaks, erosion control, as well as wildlife food and cover.

For more information or to order trees on-line, check out their web site at [www.missouri-conservation.org/forest/nursery](http://www.missouri-conservation.org/forest/nursery).

**National  
Arbor  
Day**

**April 29**

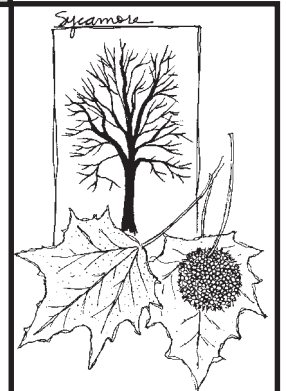
For information on planting, care, and use of seedlings listed in the **Seedling Order Form**, send for the following publications or check the web site at [www.missouriconservation.org/forest](http://www.missouriconservation.org/forest).

The following free publications are available at the nature center or to receive a copy, write to Missouri Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180, or by e-mail to [pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov).

- ◆ "Missouri Urban Trees"     ◆ "Missouri Conservation Trees and Shrubs"

To purchase the following books visit our gift shop, or go to [www.mdcnatureshop.com](http://www.mdcnatureshop.com). Soft cover for \$16.40; hard cover for \$21.50. Prices do not include shipping and tax.

- ◆ *Shrubs and Woody Vines of Missouri*     ◆ *Trees of Missouri*



**Habitat Happenings**

# First Annual Native Plant Sale

March 26

10:00am-3:00pm

Come visit with the experts and  
check out what they have to offer!

## Vendors

- ~MDC Grow Native!
- ~Missouri Wildflower Nursery
- ~Prairie Hill Farms
- ~Hamilton's Seeds and Plants

## Programs

- 11:00AM~Wildflowers of Spring with Don Kurz
- 1:00PM~Rock Gardening with George Syrigos



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**Habitat Happenings**  
Runge Conservation Nature Center  
Missouri Department of Conservation  
P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 64102





# March Events at Runge

To make a reservation, call **after 8:00AM on March 1st** to register for these programs (573/526-5544.) If you must cancel, please call as soon as possible so someone on the waiting list can attend. Thank you.

**3** *Thursday*

## Hunter Education Course

*Time: 6:00-9:30PM*  
*Ages: 11 years and older*  
Don't wait until the last minute. Enroll now to learn how to hunt safely and responsibly. Course continues on **Friday the 4th, 6:00-9:30PM** and concludes on **Saturday the 5th, 8:00AM-Noon**. Reservations required.

**6** *Sunday*

## “A Naturally In-fern-al Mystery”

*Time: 1:00-2:00PM*  
*Ages: All*  
Dragonfly is worried. She landed on a plant and spotted lots of things that look like dead insect eggs. Is her friend Wasp sick and laying eggs that won't grow into healthy bugs? Beaver thinks Beetle may also be ill. He saw the same thing in rows on another plant. What's going on? Join the Runge puppeteers as they present “A Naturally In-fern-al Mystery.” See if you can help other critters uncover clues to solve this puzzle. Reservations required.

**8** *Tuesday*

## Earth is Our Home Try-It

*Time: 6:00-7:00PM*  
*Ages: 2nd-4th Grade Brownie Scouts*  
Reservations required.

**8** *Tuesday*

## Bluebird Building

*Time: 6:00-7:00PM*  
*Ages: Families*  
Join us for a look at our state bird, the Eastern Bluebird. We'll learn about this beautiful bird's life and habitat. We will make a bluebird house to encourage our new bird buddies to settle in our yards. One house per family. Bring your own hammer. All other materials will be provided. Reservations required.

**8** *Tuesday*

## Missouri's Bears and Cougars

*Time: 7:00-8:00PM*  
*Ages: 12 years and older*  
Encountering a black bear has become more common in Missouri and even a few mountain lion sightings have been confirmed in recent years. These large mammals, once gone from Missouri, are creating lots of excitement—both positive and negative—with their return. Jim Braithwait, MDC's Wildlife Damage Biologist, drops by to separate fact from fiction about these fascinating animals. Reservations required.



**9** *Wednesday*

## Her Story Brownie Try-It

*Time: 6:30-7:30PM*  
*Ages: 2nd-4th Grade Brownie Scouts*  
Reservations required.

## Habitat Happenings

## For the Little Ones

### Babes In The Woods

*Birth through 2 years of age*

Tuesday, March 8 – 10:00AM  
Thursday, March 24 – 10:00AM  
Thursday, March 31 – 9:00AM

### Little Acorns

*3 through 6 years of age*

Friday, March 4 – 10:00AM  
Saturday, March 5 – 1:00PM  
Tuesday, March 22 – 10:00AM  
Saturday, March 26 – 10:00AM


### Awesome Opossums

Strong sniffers, pockets, thumbs— these are just a few of the curious characteristics of North America's only marsupial. Join us this month to learn about this fascinating creature. Reservations required.

**12** *Saturday*

## Runge Hiking Club

*Time: 8:00AM-5:30PM*  
*Ages: 18 years and older*  
See splendid sights! Learn about our wondrous state! Come join novice and experienced day hikers alike as we strap on our boots and go! Each month, we'll meet at the nature center, car pool to one of Missouri's choice hiking spots, and hike one or two of the best trails. A volunteer naturalist will lead the hikes and point out highlights as we go.

Some of Missouri's finest and most diverse natural communities are showcased at **Meramec State Park**. Within the park's 6,896 acres lie expansive savannas and open woodlands, towering forests, sheer bluffs, and rocky glades. Over 40 caves are in the park, as well as one of the most diverse rivers in the nation, the Meramec. This month, we'll hike the south loop of the **Wilderness Trail** (6 miles, ) , which takes us into the most rugged and remote area of the park. Bring your lunch, water, hiking boots or comfortable shoes, and come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

**16** *Wednesday*

## Spring Serenade

*Time: 6:00-7:00PM*  
*Ages: All*  
Do you hear all that racket out there? What are those noisy animals that keep us awake at night? Join us for a night hike on one of our trails to learn what animals are waking up from their long winter's nap and serenading us through the night. Dress for the weather. Reservations required.

**17** *Thursday*

## Wildlifers: Nature Quilt Block

*Time: 10:00-11:30AM, 1:00-2:30PM, 3:30-5:00PM, and 6:00-7:30PM*  
*Ages: 50 and older*  
Bees are the most important pollinators of all flowering plants. Missouri has over 100 species of native bees. Join us this month as we learn more about bees and make a patch to add to your collection. Reservations required.

**17** *Thursday*

## Woodcock Walk

*Time: 6:00-8:00PM*  
*Ages: All*  
What goes 'peeeent' and flies like a drunken moth? Answer: American Woodcock. Join us as we uncover the mysteries of the woodcock and venture outside to search for this interesting bird and watch his mating display. Reservations required.

**23** *Wednesday*

## Naturalist Badge

*Time: 6:30-7:30PM*  
*Ages: 4th Grade Cub Scouts*  
Reservations required.

**24** *Thursday*

## Woodcock Walk

*Time: 6:00-8:00PM*  
*Ages: All*  
Refer to March 17th for description.

**26** *Saturday*

## First Annual Native Plant Sale

*Time: 10:00AM-3:00PM*  
*Ages: All*  
Refer to back page for details.

**26** *Saturday*

## Wildflowers Of Spring

*Time: 11:00AM-Noon*  
*Ages: Adults*



Interesting facts and folklore about spring wildflowers will be presented during this program. Don Kurz will test your knowledge with a wildflower quiz featuring his outstanding photography. Don's work has appeared in several calendars and magazines and in numerous wildflower books including *Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers*. He is also the author of *Scenic Driving the Ozarks: Including the Ouachita Mountains, Ozark Wildflowers, Shrubs and Woody Vines of Missouri*, and *Trees of Missouri*. Reservations required.

**26** *Saturday*

## Rock gardening for the rich and famous and the willing and strong!

*Time: 1:00PM-2:00PM*  
*Ages: Adults*  
This will be a hands on demonstration on how to use rocks in your naturescape to turn a nasty, hard to work with area into a great native plant haven. Whether it is an unsightly hillside that's always eroding or an area that just won't grow anything, this program will offer you hope and encouragement. No reservations required.

**26** *Saturday*

## Runge Reading Guild

*Time: 2:30-4:00PM*  
*Ages: 18 years and older*  
We will read and share our thoughts on Part II “Sketches Here and There” and Part III “The Upshot” from Aldo Leopold's ***A Sand County Almanac - and Sketches Here and There***. Leopold states in the forward of his book that, “Sketches Here and There’ recounts some of the episodes in my life that taught me, gradually and painfully, that the company is out of step. These episodes, scattered over the continent and through forty years of time, present a fair sample of the issues that bear the collective label: conservation.” Please read **Parts II and III** and join us for discussion on Leopold and his writing! Reservations required.

**31** *Thursday*

## Pond Workshop

*Time: 6:30-9:00PM*  
*Ages: Adults*  
Planning to build a new pond? Have one and would like to improve it? Then this workshop is for you! Proper pond location and construction, fish stocking, fish management, aquatic vegetation control, and nuisance wildlife control will be covered in this comprehensive workshop. Reservations required.



# April Events at Runge

To make a reservation, call **after 8:00AM on April 1st** to register for these programs (573/526-5544.) If you must cancel, please call as soon as possible so someone on the waiting list can attend. Thank you.

3 Sunday

### “A Naturally In-fern-al Mystery”

Time: 2:00-3:00PM

Ages: All

Dragonfly is worried. She landed on a plant and spotted lots of things that look like dead insect eggs. Is her friend Wasp sick and laying eggs that won't grow into healthy bugs? Beaver thinks Beetle may also be ill. He saw the same thing in rows on another plant. What's going on? Join the Runge puppeteers as they present “A Naturally In-fern-al Mystery.” See if you can help other critters uncover clues to solve this puzzle. Reservations required.

6 Wednesday

### Eco-Explorer Brownie Try-It

Time: 6:30-7:30PM

Ages: 2nd-4th grade Brownie Scouts

Reservations required.

8 Friday

### Spring Serenade

Time: 6:00-7:00PM

Ages: All



Do you hear all that racket out there? What are those noisy animals that keep us awake at night? Join us for a night hike on one of our trails to learn what animals are waking up from their long winter's nap and serenading us through the night. Dress for the weather. Reservations required.

9 Saturday

### Runge Hiking Club

Time: 8:00AM-5:30PM

Ages: 18 years and older

The largest group of petroglyphs in the state is in **Washington State Park**, where thunderbirds, snakes, arrows, and other symbols were carved in limestone bedrock between 400 and 1,000 years ago. Join us as we hike the **1,000 Steps Trail** (1.5 miles ), and the **Opossum Track Trail** (3 miles ). We'll view the petroglyphs, gaze at scenic overlooks of the Big River valley, and hike on a rich talus slope famous for its annual display of spring woodland wildflowers. Bring your lunch, water, hiking boots or comfortable shoes, and come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

**Trail rating system** for the trails advertised for the Runge Hiking Club.



-Easiest trail—flat terrain with no obstructions (like the Katy Trail)



-Slight inclines and/or few obstructions (gravel, few rocks)



-Moderate inclines and/or occasional rocks or roots



-Occasional significant inclines and/or rocks or roots



-Most difficult—significant inclines, obstructions, and/or loose rocks

### Habitat Happenings

12 Tuesday

### Worm Bin Basics

Time: 6:30-7:30PM

Ages: All

Learn to make your own worm bin. Then, feed your garbage to the worms and use the compost in your garden. Finally, use the little red wigglers for fish bait. Reservations required.

13 Wednesday

### Sharing Your World With Wildlife-Bear Achievement#5

Time: 6:30-7:30PM

Ages: 2nd grade Cub Scouts

Reservations required.

17 Sunday

### Otterly Amazing Finale

Time: 2:00-3:00PM

Ages: All Ages



After years of traveling throughout Missouri, Glenn Chambers is retiring, but not before making one more visit to Runge! Glenn has shared his love for and knowledge of river otters for many years, exciting children and adults alike with the antics of his otters. Join us for a look into

the world of the river otter and meet one of Glenn's live otters. Reservations required.

20 Wednesday

### Earth Connections Badge

Time: 6:00-7:00PM

Ages: Junior Girl Scouts

Reservations required.

21 Thursday

### Wildlifers: Nature Quilt Block

Time: 10:00-11:30AM, 1:00-2:30PM, 3:30-5:00PM, and 6:00-7:30PM

Ages: 50 and older

Missouri toads and frogs are colorful, harmless, vocal, and valuable. Join us this month as we learn more about these interesting critters and make a patch to add to your collection. This session completes 7 1/2 years of nature education, quilting, and wonderful friendships. Please bring all quilts for the Quilt Show to this program. Reservations required.

23 Saturday

### Wildlifers Quilt Show

Time: 10:00AM-4:00PM

Ages: All Ages

Come see the handiwork of the Wildlifers group! These beautiful quilts display blocks created during the past year. You will be amazed by the many ways nature can be interpreted through the eye of a needle. No reservations required.

24 Sunday

### Wildlifers Quilt Show

Time: 1:00-4:00PM

Ages: All Ages

Refer to April 23 for description.

## For the Little Ones

### Babes In The Woods

Birth through 2 years of age

Thursday, April 7 – 11:00AM

Saturday, April 9 – 10:00AM

### Little Acorns

3 through 6 years of age

Tuesday, April 5 – 11:00AM

Tuesday, April 19 – 11:00AM

Saturday, April 30 – 10:00AM

### Animal Babies

Many wild animals are born in the spring-time and it is a delightful miracle each time. Let's learn about the wild animal babies in our own backyard – Runge Nature Center! Reservations required.

30 Saturday

### Moving Time

Time: 2:00-3:00PM

Ages: All

Who's moving in? Who's moving out? The natural world is rearranging itself and now is the time to find all kinds of new critters in the area. Join us for a talk and walk about who is migrating out of the area, who is coming in for the summer, and who's just passing through. We'll also look at animals who aren't usually considered migrators. No reservations required.

30 Saturday

### Runge Reading Guild

Time: 2:30-4:00PM

Ages: 18 years and older

We are reading **PrairyErth - A Deep Map** by William Least Heat-Moon.

Robert Penn Warren pronounced Heat-Moon's *Blue Highways* a masterpiece and now Heat-Moon has pulled to the side of the road and set off on foot to take readers on an exploration of time and space, landscape and history in the Flint Hills of central Kansas.

Enjoy reading this book about the heartland, and join us in a discussion of this Missouri author and his writing! Reservations required.

30 Saturday

### Fern Hike

Time: 9:00AM-Noon

Ages: 18 years and older

Meet at Runge to learn more about these exciting plants. We'll have a short indoor program, then carpool to Rock Bridge State Park near Columbia for a hike to locate and identify the beautiful ferns. Dress for the weather! Reservations required.



Cinnamon Fern



Sensitive Fern